

CONNECTIONS



2011

Writing Across the Curriculum
Winning Essays

Southwestern Community College

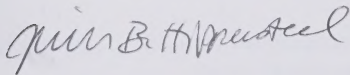
April 2011

Writing is part of the culture at Southwestern Community College. Our students encounter varied opportunities to write in classes across the curriculum, encouraging them to investigate, to discover, and to understand. For our students, writing is a lens through which to view the world – to gain insight, to experience new perspectives, and to engage the world as thoughtful citizens. Writing is a gateway to understand the past and to look forward to the future with hope. The Writing Across the Curriculum program has set a goal to provide our students as many opportunities as possible to use this powerful tool of writing. As with any worthy goal, our students learn that writing well involves hard work and dedication. Achievement, then, requires celebration.

It is my pleasure to offer you the winning essays from the Third Annual WAC Essay Awards. Judged by a panel of instructors from across disciplines, these essays exemplify the critical thinking, original voice, and clear, yet powerful prose that combine to create excellent writing. I speak for the entire panel when I say that it was a privilege to read all the entries in this year's contest. The essays included in this publication are but a small sampling of the quality writing our students are producing in classes each semester.

As you read, I ask you to join in our celebration of student writing.

In celebration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jennifer B. Hippensteel". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large, stylized 'J' and 'H'.

Jennifer B. Hippensteel
Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator
Southwestern Community College

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HEROIC HERETIC:
THE CONTROVERSIAL LIFE OF JOAN OF ARC

Kayla Pruett

HIS 121

March 31, 2011

It is the late Middle Ages and France is in chaos. The English have overrun her borders, conquering her cities and oppressing her people. The future of the French kingdom is in dire peril, the successor to the throne uncrowned. Out of this darkness arises a young girl named Joan, who will carry the fate of the French people on her shoulders.

The heroic exploits of Joan of Arc have fascinated both scholars and schoolchildren alike for generations. Though some details from this turbulent time in French history have been lost, Joan's story has lived on in historical records, eyewitness accounts, and even letters dictated by Joan herself. Though Joan lived a truncated life, the impact she had on France is undeniable. She was obviously a hero yet was burned at the stake as a heretic by her enemies. The question is, what was it about this young girl that threatened her accusers? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand not only where Joan came from but also some of her most controversial acts.

Her Beginnings

Joan of Arc was born Jehanne Darc on January 6, 1412 to Jacques Darc and his wife Isabelle in the small village of Domrémy, located in the Meuse River Valley.¹ Despite the tumultuous period into which Joan was born, a surprising amount is known about her early childhood, including anecdotes and memories from her neighbors and friends. According to reports from the townsfolk of Domrémy, Joan grew up on a fifty-acre farm and obediently helped her parents and siblings complete the daily chores.² She was also known as a devout Catholic who "went to church gladly and often."³ She appeared to everyone a typical young girl,

¹ Allen Williamson, "Biography of Joan of Arc (Jehanne Darc)," *Joan of Arc Archive*, last modified March 30, 2010, http://joan-of-arc.org/joanofarc_biography.html.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

simply an “illiterate shepherdess” who had a great passion for the church and God.⁴ A childhood friend of Joan’s, simply listed in transcripts as “*Colin, son of Jean Colin of Greux*,” commented that she was “greatly committed to the service of God and the Blessed Mary so that because of her devotion the other boys and I, who was young then, would laugh at her.”⁵ From all accounts, it appears Joan spent her days helping on the family farm, attending church regularly, and carrying out her everyday duties as a member of a medieval peasant family. However, to anyone who knows the impact her life had on France, this idea seems unbelievable. What could have made this average peasant girl leave the only home she had ever known, travel many perilous miles and risk death to aid the failing country of France? The answer may be found in what Joan was most famous for, her highly controversial “voices.”

Visions of Saints

Joan first heard the voice of Saint Michael the Archangel at the age of 13.⁶ She described the initial experience as frightening but that after the third experience with the voice, she “knew that it was the voice of an angel.”⁷ Saint Michael informed Joan that Saints Margaret and Catherine would soon come to her too and that she should listen to their advice and guidance because anything they told her was by God’s order.⁸ After this experience, Saints Margaret and Catherine came to her and made her swear to sustain her virginity for as long as God

⁴ Don O’Reilly, “The Maid of Orleans,” *Military History* 15, (April 1998): 22.

⁵ Williamson, 1.

⁶ Ibid, 2.

⁷ Ibid, 2.

⁸ Ibid, 2.

commanded.⁹ Finally, when Joan was 17 years old, the voices told her that it was time to leave Domrémy and rescue the besieged town of Orléans.¹⁰

Whether the voices Joan heard were truly the voices of saints or her imagination has been debated wildly. Despite the people that believe the latter, some undeniable and downright eerie occurrences point to the former. The first of these happened upon Joan's arrival in the presence of the dauphin (soon to be King Charles VII). Prior to their meeting, the dauphin switched clothes with an official to see if Joan could choose him out of the crowd, as a test of her supernatural abilities.¹¹ The official historian of the court, Jean Chartier, described the meeting of the two as follows:

Then Joan, having come before the king, made the curtsies and reverences that customarily are made to a king as though she had been nourished at the court and, her greeting having been delivered, said in addressing the king, "God give you life, gentle King," even though she did not know him and had never seen him, and there were many pompous lords there more opulently dressed than was the king. Wherefore he replied to Joan: "What if I am not the king, Joan?" Pointing to one of the lords, he said: "There is the king." To which she answered, "In God's name, gentle Prince, it is you and none other."¹²

The second piece of evidence for the supernatural origin of Joan's voices happened soon after this initial meeting when Joan spoke to the dauphin in private. What was said during that conversation is still not known for certain. Guillaume Gouffier, the dauphin's chamberlain at the

⁹ O'Reilly.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jeremy Adams, *Joan of Arc: Her Story* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 22-23.

time, alleged that Joan had repeated to the dauphin a silent prayer that he had made whilst alone in his oratory one morning.¹³ Whether this is true or not we will never know. Nevertheless, whatever Joan said to the dauphin in private convinced him of her sincerity and that her message came from God. It was enough to convince the dauphin, a powerful man in his own right, that this common peasant girl was worth his time, energy, and funds.

Another astounding incident occurred not long after her meeting with the dauphin, during the tribunal given to examine her both physically and spiritually. During the tribunal, Joan made four predictions of events that would happen because of her service to France. The first prediction was that the English “would be driven away” and that the siege in Orléans would lift and be free of the English again.¹⁴ Joan completed this task in May 8, 1429 by forcing the English to leave Orléans, effectively ending the siege.¹⁵ The second event she predicted that day was that the dauphin would be crowned king at Reims and this, too, was completed on July 17, 1429, following several military victories by Joan.¹⁶ The third and fourth predictions were that the city of Paris would be ruled by the French king again (it was currently under English rule) and that the Duke of Orléans, who had been captured by the English in 1415, would return to France.¹⁷ Though these two events did not occur until after Joan’s death, they did indeed come to pass.¹⁸ These predictions lend further proof to the supernatural origins argument and make her “voices” all that more incredible.

The final occurrence that points to a supernatural origin comes from a request made by Joan on the road to Chinon in 1429. Joan asked that someone get her a sword that was “rusty,

¹³ *Ibid*, 24.

¹⁴ Adams, 29.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 48-49.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 29, 64.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 29, 180.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 29.

with five crosses engraved on it” and located at a church named Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois.¹⁹ The question is, how did Joan know the sword was there, given that it was buried underground and she had never been to the town or church? When asked that question at her trial in Rouen, she answered:

She knew from her voices that this sword was there, and she had never seen the man who went to find the aforesaid sword for her, and she wrote the men of the church of that place that she hoped it would please them that she should have that sword, and they sent it to her. It was not very deeply buried underground, behind the altar; she did not know if it would be exactly before the altar or behind it. She said again that just after the sword was found the men of that church gave it a good rubbing, and thereupon the rust fell off without effort; it was an armorer of Tours who went to find it.²⁰

Williamson notes that, according to legend, this same sword had been a donation given to the church by Charles Martel in 732 after defeating the Saracens at the battle of Tours.²¹ This means that when Joan found the sword, it had been in the church for almost seven hundred years.

Looking at the evidence, the possibility of a supernatural origin for Joan’s “voices” is strong. An average peasant girl from a small farming town in rural France could not have known or predicted the things that Joan did. No matter the origin, be it imaginary or supernatural, it is clear that her “voices” guided Joan throughout her lifetime and inspired in her a sense of bravery and tenacity that certainly seemed supernatural.

¹⁹ Ibid, 37.

²⁰ Adams, 37.

²¹ Williamson, 4.

Manly Maiden

As if her voices were not controversial enough, Joan's appearance also caused a stir. At any given time during Joan's journey, she was always to be found wearing men's clothing with her hair cut into a short, rounded style.²² She said that her voices told her to dress this way for practical purposes.²³ Joan first donned men's clothing in Vaucouleurs, while trying to gain permission to see the dauphin from Robert de Baudricourt.²⁴ At her trial in Rouen, her decision to continue wearing male clothing was what gave her accusers the final push they needed for an execution, since she had "relapsed" after a period of time in which she wore women's clothing.²⁵

Joan's judges at Rouen saw her action of wearing male attire as an insult to God, however, there were many practical reasons for Joan to wear men's clothing. The first reason being that Joan was surrounded by men at all times, especially during her military campaigns. Therefore, the possibility of rape increased significantly. There were no women in the French army at this time except for the prostitutes who frequented the camps. Joan donned the attire not because she preferred it but because she feared being raped.²⁶ Male attire during this period was intensely complicated in nature, involving two layers of hosen securely fastened to a doublet using twenty cords and each cord was tied into three eyelets.²⁷ This made the clothing extremely difficult for someone to pull off, especially if Joan was struggling, and was a great guard against sexual assault. Witnesses have pointed out that Joan wore her armor or full attire at all times, even to bed, which led to intense bruising.²⁸ Though this may seem like extreme measures, Joan

²² Williamson, 5.

²³ *Ibid*, 5.

²⁴ Adams, 20.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 105.

²⁶ O'Reilly.

²⁷ Williamson, 5.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 5.

had an important reason for maintaining her virginity. Her story rested on the fact that she was a virgin. According to Adams, in Joan's time "men and women who consecrated themselves completely to God showed their acceptance of the divine call by remaining virgin and hence autonomous, totally at the Lord's service in heart and body."²⁹ If Joan, who called herself the Maid, had been examined and found to be impure, then she would have lost all credibility with the dauphin.³⁰ She would have been branded a liar and sent home, a laughingstock. Joan's virginity not only lent her credibility but also made her visions appear truly divine in nature. Therefore, maintaining her innocence was a matter of utmost importance.

Another, more obvious, reason behind Joan's appearance was that she needed to fit in. Joan was surrounded by soldiers, all men, who were not going to take a general in a dress seriously. She was in charge of seasoned veterans and needed to look the part. This also made sense for Joan in battle because she looked like every other soldier, making her less of a target for the English to seek out. In her armor and short hair, Joan would have been hard to pick out in a crowd of soldiers during the heat of battle. The effect Joan's appearance had on her soldiers is noticeable in the accounts given by them. According to Williamson, the soldiers were "astonished by her fortitude while wearing armor "with one soldier in particular, Louis de Coutes noting that "Jehanne (Joan) was greatly bruised when she came to the town of Orléans, because she had slept in her armor on the night of her departure from Blois."³¹ Joan's lack of complaint and quiet strength won the hearts of her soldiers and inspired them to follow her. Though unconventional, it is clear that Joan's attire suited her mission and was essential in ensuring her success.

²⁹ Adams, 31.

³⁰ Adams, 31.

³¹ Williamson, 5.

Reason for Her Death

After looking at the controversy Joan brought to this medieval time, it is clear to see why the judges at Rouen felt it necessary to execute her. Joan was a threat to the values that medieval society held dear. She threatened not only the teachings of the Catholic Church but also traditions that ran much deeper, including the role of women in medieval society. In Joan's time, the Catholic Church ruled in Europe. The male leaders of the Church spoke for God through scripture and there was no place within the Catholic Church for new revelations or visions from God. What Joan claimed was dangerous, not only because she was not a church leader but also because she was a woman. A woman receiving visions from God threatened the views taught by the Catholic Church and was considered blasphemous. In addition, though Joan was not attempting to challenge gender roles during her era, she certainly did. During her life, Joan not only dressed in men's clothing, she also led an army into battle during a time when no woman was allowed to serve in the military.

The worst part for her adversaries was that Joan succeeded in every area and was immensely popular with the common people of France. As her fame skyrocketed and her story became legend, the English developed a fear that this peasant girl would inspire generations of common people who would believe that they could *do* something. Ironically, with her untimely and tragic death, her legend only grew and spread, bringing inspiration to the entire country of France. The bravery and strength that Joan exhibited in the face of death, boosted morale throughout the French ranks and led to the defeat of the English enemy. That is the real reason that Joan was executed, she was a woman ahead of her time that had the ability to inspire change.

Conclusion

So, who was Joan of Arc? Scholars can argue and debate until the end of time, but in truth, the answer depends on who is asked. Some saw her as a deceitful heretic, deserving of death and purged by the fire. Others saw her as the pious heroine of France, destined to live among the angels beyond Heaven's Gate. The truth is probably somewhere in between or perhaps, a bit of both. Maybe she was a heroic heretic, with visions from God and a penchant for battle armor. But no matter how she is painted, one thing is clear. Joan was an amazing woman, soldier, and believer who had the ability to inspire everyone who knew her and that is why her story lives on.

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Share My Fear:
Robespierre and the Politics of Paranoia

Michael Redman
Western Civilization II

On July 27, 1793, Maximilien Robespierre was finally elected to the Committee of Public Safety in Paris. Having sought this post avidly for some time, on the eve of his induction to the Committee, he composed a sort of personal manifesto. Beginning with what he saw as the obstacles to the Revolution achieving its goals, he concluded with what he believed to be the only solution available to the Committee in resolving the continuing civil war: "...punishing traitors and conspirators, especially those deputies and administrators who are to blame."¹ With this manifesto and his subsequent rise to power within the Committee, Robespierre not only oversaw the following years' Terrors, but also brought a new politics of paranoia into the mainstream of Revolutionary political thought.

There is little to suggest that conspiracy theories played a large part in pre-Revolutionary French politics.² In fact, Enlightenment thinking had given the educated classes new models of cause and effect in economic and political affairs, based on primarily on rationalism.³ In his book *Emile*, Rousseau had written that "the how and why of the entrance of every vice can be traced."⁴ As a result of rationalism's ability to offer specific names and causes in the country's affairs, conspiracy interpretations of politics were rare, even during the pre-Revolutionary period of 1787 to 1789. However, one individual's writings did give evidence of a paranoid style: Maximilien Robespierre's. In his pamphlet *To The Nation of Artois, on the Necessity of Reforming the Estates of Artois* Robespierre took the provincial estates of Artois to task for

¹ Ruth Scurr, *Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2006), 282.

² Timothy Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution: French Elites and the Origins of the Terror, 1789-1792," *The American Historical Review*, June (2000): 12, <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/105.3/ahr000691.html>

³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴ Scurr, *Fatal Purity*, 25.

mismanagement of the People's affairs, but also referred darkly to the "innocent victims of vile persecution" without naming specific individuals, committees or organizations as responsible.⁵

As the Revolution approached, such thoughts found a welcome home among the radical Jacobin Society. Their fervent belief in their own positions as true and right led them to believe that their more moderate allies in the National Assembly must have been at best fools or dupes, or, at worst, conspirators.⁶ Enjoying popularity among the Jacobins, Robespierre was able to cry out: "Citizens, you will only have peace by keeping your eyes open to all their treacheries, and your hand raised against all traitors!"⁷ In December 1790, the Jacobins asserted that someone had tried to plant a bomb in their building.⁸ One year later, during the autumn of 1791, the Surveillance Committee was created and its deputy, Claude Basire, proclaimed that the Revolution was "surrounded by conspiracy" and continued:

Everywhere plots are being hatched, and we are brought continual denunciations of specific incidents which can only be linked to the grand conspiracy whose existence no one here can doubt.⁹

Not all perceived conspiracies were flights of paranoia, however, and in the early days of the Revolution, it appears that the plots for which evidence was found gave credence to accusations of conspiracy, for which no evidence could be produced. In 1790, the Breton Association had been formed by counterrevolutionary French nobles and claimed "cells" across four western French provinces: Brittany, Normandy, Anjou and Poitou. By 1792, the Breton

⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁶ Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession," 22.

⁷ William T. Vollmann, *Rising Up and Rising Down*, Vol. 3, (San Francisco: McSweeney's Books, 2003), 395.

⁸ Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession," 22.

⁹ Ibid., 28.

Association was in possession of at least 6,000 firearms and four cannons and was shut down by Revolutionary authorities in the summer of that year.¹⁰ Perhaps most important, the attempted flight of Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette to Austria in 1791 exposed a royal plot to put an end to the Revolution that involved participants in Paris, in the French army, among emigrants in Germany, and a pattern of deception and perjury on the part of the king. Journalists such as Marat had prophesied that a royal flight would take place; now these predictions-which had been dismissed as paranoid ranting by the Constituent Assembly's leadership-had come true.¹¹ On the evening of the king's arrest, Robespierre began to suspect a plot to assassinate Revolutionary patriots and addressed the Jacobin Club, suggesting that even those same patriots could not be trusted:

What scares me, gentlemen, is precisely that which seems to reassure everyone else. Here I need you to hear me out. I say once again, what scares me is what reassures all the others: it is that since this morning all our enemies speak the same language as us...Look about you, share my fear, and consider how all now wear the same mask of patriotism.¹²

The invitation to "share my fear" was not simply rhetoric and quickly produced a sinister moral logic. With the conflation of the people and the Revolution into the person of Robespierre, anyone who disagreed with Robespierre on the Revolution's aims and tactics was considered by him to be a traitor. At the outset of the Revolution had written of "the general good, which knows how to triumph over pity" and contrasts it with "that weakness which is sensibility toward an

¹⁰ David Andress, *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 63.

¹¹ Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession," 24.

¹² Scurr, *Fatal Purity*, 165.

individual, and barbarity towards society."¹³ He had also written that "one leads the people by reason, the enemies of the people by terror."¹⁴ The moral logic required to terrorize a people he not only represented, but increasingly believed to be inseparable from himself contributed profoundly to his increasing sense of persecution. With this in mind, it has been theorized that Robespierre's paranoia was not unusual, since a defining characteristic of paranoia is not only a deep mistrust of others, but also an equally deep mistrust of the self.¹⁵

In 1794, after two attempts on his life, Robespierre addressed the National Convention with alarm:

Slander, arson, poison, atheism, corruption, starvation and murder-they [the enemies of France] have been prodigal in every sort of crime: but there still remains assassination, assassination, and again assassination.¹⁶

Of course, Robespierre was finally brought down not by an assassin's bullet or blade, but by the very political mechanism he had helped to create. His conception of the Revolution and of the General Will had folded back on itself so that finally his beloved People (whom he loved but could not trust) and the Revolution itself became, on the day of his execution, a society of one: Maximilien Robespierre.

¹³ Vollmann, *Rising Up*, 395.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 375.

¹⁵ Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession," 40.

¹⁶ Scurr, *Fatal Purity*, 325.

Wine, Roses, and Murder

Documented Essay #2

Michelle Barboich

Ms. Kehrer

ENG 131 MD1

October 27, 2010

Michelle Barborich

Ms. Kehrler

ENG 131 MD1

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Wine, Roses, and Murder

The central characters in William Faulkner's (1897-1962) short story, "A Rose for Emily" and Edgar Allan Poe's (1809-1849) short story, "The Cask of Amontillado" appear at first glance to have nothing in common. Miss Emily Grierson, the focus of "A Rose for Emily", is a lonely, aging woman, living a solitary life in a decaying house in the small southern town of Jefferson in the post Civil War South. The old Grierson house, a one time magnificent mansion, now falling into disrepair, is the main setting of the story. A third person objective narrator tells the story, but the narrator is more of a gossip than a reporter, making him or her unreliable. The events of Miss Emily's life that lead up to her murdering her boyfriend, Homer Barron, and her own death, some forty years later serve as the plot for the short story. "A Rose for Emily" is structured sequentially; that is, the events are told out of chronological order. The story is structured in a way that does not reveal the murder to the reader until the last paragraph. A static character, incapable of growth or change, Miss Emily is not a typical protagonist. In Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "The Cask of Amontillado", a vengeful, conniving man named Montresor serves as the focus of interest. The story is set in nineteenth century Rome, in the catacombs of Montresor's palazzo. "The Cask of Amontillado" is told by Montresor, a first person but an unreliable narrator, because he is recalling the events of a murder from fifty years ago to a priest, bragging and embellishing upon the memory. The plot of "The Cask of Amontillado" is how Montresor lures his "friend" Fortunato down to the catacombs of his palazzo to kill him for

revenge. The structure of the story is chronological, told in the order the events of one evening happened. Montresor, like Miss Emily, is also a static character. Fifty years after the murder of Fortunato, Montresor has not changed. He remains very proud of murdering Fortunato. Though Miss Emily and Montresor are characters in different countries, they have more in common than the reader would think. In Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily", the narrator told that Miss Emily's family was at one time wealthy and influential, but time has taken its toll. The same can be said of the Montresor family in Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado". Though Miss Emily and Montresor's families are no longer wealthy or powerful, the pride and arrogance of the character's backgrounds remain ingrained in their mentalities. A much more disturbing connection Miss Emily and Montresor share is the fact that they both murdered a close friend, and not only murders, but premeditated murders. Where Miss Emily and Montresor differ is in their individual motives for murder. Miss Emily poisoned her lover to keep him from abandoning her, where as Montresor sealed his "friend" in a wall, deep in the catacombs of his palazzo for revenge. Miss Emily Grierson and Montresor, both arrogant and overly proud, are premeditated murderers but they kill for different reasons.

In the Old South, the overly proud and arrogant aristocracy reigned supreme. Miss Emily's father is described by Jack Scherting as, "an impervious man, proud of his Southern heritage and his family's status in Jefferson" (400). This was the attitude Miss Emily Grierson was brought up with, and the attitude she maintained all her life. According to Emily's father, no man was good enough for her, the high and mighty Grierson that she was, and so he turned away all her potential suitors, and at the same time embedding the notion into Miss Emily's head that she was better than the average person. Another act of defiance and arrogance is the Grierson house itself, "a big squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and

spires..." has fallen into decay after the death of Miss Emily's father (216). As time passes on, the house, like its owner, arrogantly refuses to change and adapt to the times. By the time of Miss Emily's death, the house is described as, "lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps--an eyesore among eyesores" (216).

Miss Emily's interactions with various townspeople also shows her arrogance. "It is clear from the beginning of the story that Miss Emily has for some time been accorded the status of royalty in Jefferson", writes Gary Kriewald (5). This idea was reinforced in Miss Emily's mind when after her father's death; Colonel Sartoris remitted all of her taxes, saying her father had lent the town money previously, so this is how the town would pay her back. Later on, the new generation of leaders in the town try to collect taxes from her, sending her tax notices and letters, but Miss Emily ignores them. Finally, the authorities come to her house to collect her taxes. Kriewald writes, "it is clear that Faulkner sets the scene to suggest a monarch granting her subjects an audience" (6). Miss Emily tells them dismissively "I have no taxes in Jefferson" (217). When the representative asks if she received a letter from the sheriff, Miss Emily replies, "I received a paper, yes...Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff...I have no taxes in Jefferson" (217). The narrator goes on to tell the reader that Miss Emily, "vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before" (217). Faulkner does not use "dismiss" or "send away", he uses "vanquished". Miss Emily, with her arrogance, utterly defeated the city authorities. Emily's arrogance is evident when she speaks with the druggist about poison. Miss Emily tells him, "I want arsenic" (219). The narrator states that Miss Emily stood and stared at the druggist, "erect, her face like a strained flag" (219). Clearly this shows a woman who was not going to be told no by common worker. According to Kriewald, this is an example of how "Emily demonstrates her impressive ability to silence anyone intent on

thwarting her will or infringing on her privilege...." (7). Miss Emily was extremely proud of her noble standing in Jefferson, and she was not going to bow down to anyone.

Montresor is also a character that is overly proud and arrogant. Before heading to Montresor's palazzo, Montresor says that, "Fortunato possessed himself of my arm...I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo" (351). The choice of word use clearly lets the reader know that Montresor sees himself as superior to Fortunato. Elena Baraban writes, "it is not accidental that Montresor uses the verbs "to possess" and "to suffer"...He "suffered" when his offender virtually led him to his palazzo because etiquette does not allow minor aristocracy the liberty of touching someone of more noble origin" (51). As Montresor leads Fortunato into the vaults, Fortunato is impressed with the vastness of the catacombs. Montresor haughtily reminds him that his family, "were a great and numerous family" (352); however Fortunato cannot remember the coat of arms of the Montresor family. Montresor reminds Fortunato of his arms, "a huge human foot d'or, in a field of azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel" (352). Montresor also states his family's motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit", which translates, no one insults me with impunity (352). In the nineteenth century, other high-ranking families would remember a noble family's coat of arms, but since Fortunato cannot remember Montresor's crest would suggest to the reader that the Montresor family no longer has a great amount of wealth or influence, though Montresor in his arrogance believes he should. As much as Montresor hates Fortunato, he does admit Fortunato is more powerful than he, telling Fortunato as they walk through the catacombs, "... You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was" (352).

Montresor's arrogance is shown through how he carries out his murderous plan. Montresor must consider himself intellectually superior to Fortunato, for the entire way down to

the lowest crypt, Montresor is constantly baiting Fortunato, clearly pleased with himself for how clever he believes his revenge to be. As the men walk down through the network of catacombs, Fortunato begins coughing. Montresor, pretending to be concerned for Fortunato's health, states more than once that they should turn back, however Fortunato refuses and the men continue through the catacombs. Montresor, knowing that Fortunato does not care for a man called Luchresi, mentions his name several times throughout the story, and each time Fortunato shows his own disdain for this man, calling him and "ignoramus". Fortunato's dislike of Luchresi and his own pride fuels his desire further to be the one to confirm the identity of the Amontillado. Finally, as Montresor is sealing Fortunato behind a wall of bricks, he taunts Fortunato saying, "once again I implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you" (354). Fortunato begins to scream and rattle the chains which hold him to the wall. Montresor is unbothered by this and begins mocking Fortunato, his cries louder than his victim's. The entire trip through the catacombs, as well as Montresor's construction of the brick wall, is unhurried, showing Montresor's arrogance in that he is not worried about being caught, and he is clearly enjoying himself. James Gargano writes, "Montresor's ironic appreciation of his own deviousness seems further to justify his arrogance of intellect" (180).

Emily Grierson, a pathetic old woman, does not seem capable of murder, however that is what she is, a premeditated murderer. Miss Emily went to the pharmacy and purchased arsenic. Not long after she purchased the poison, Miss Emily went to the jeweler's and ordered, "a man's toilet set in silver, with the letters H.B. on each piece" (220). Two days later, Miss Emily bought men's clothing, including a nightshirt. After Emily's death, some forty years after she murdered Homer, the townspeople discovered his body lying in bed, posed as if in an embrace, in an upstairs bedroom, the room "furnished as for a bridal" (222), the men's toilet set and clothes

arranged neatly. Miss Emily must have assumed that one day someone would see this room, so she planned all the details to make it look as if Homer was her husband, and that perhaps he had died naturally, instead of being murdered with arsenic.

Montresor's murder of Fortunato is equally elaborate as Miss Emily's murder of her lover, Homer Barron. Montresor comes across Fortunato on an evening during carnival season. Fortunato in the spirit of the season is dressed in the costume of a court jester. Montresor informs his "friend" that he has obtained a cask of Amontillado, though he is not sure if it truly is the wine or if it is sherry. Montresor says he will have Luchresi tell him if it is Amontillado or not. Fortunato becomes excited, and takes Montresor by the arm and starts leading him towards Montresor's palazzo, saying, "Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry" (351). Montresor baited Fortunato by insulting his pride, for Fortunato considered himself a great wine connoisseur. Fortunato's own pride hurt, he becomes insistent on tasting the wine. The two men head to Montresor's palazzo, as Montresor planned. As Montresor leads Fortunato through the catacombs, the men enter a deep crypt with walls lined with human remains, the bones on one side thrown down to a pile on the floor. Fortunato approaches the bare wall to view a recess. Montresor tells him to go forward, for the Amontillado is there. Fortunato enters the niche, followed by Montresor who quickly chains Fortunato to the wall. Fortunato, drunk, at first does not realize what his friend has done. Montresor walks over to the pile of bones and throws them aside, revealing a pile of bricks and mortar. Montresor begins laying bricks to wall up the niche where Fortunato, dressed as a jester, is helplessly chained to the wall.

What drove these characters to murder? In Emily Grierson's case, she murdered her love interest, Homer Barron, to keep him with her, forever. After seeing each other for two years, at one point Miss Emily must have realized Homer had no intention of marrying her. In Miss

Emily's eyes, she believed that she and Homer were practically engaged after being seen driving through town together. Saddened by this reality, and scared of losing the one person she had any connection with, Miss Emily devised a plan to make sure Homer could never leave her. An article in the *Magill Book Review* puts Emily's plight simply as, "without a husband, her life will have no meaning. If Homer is thinking of abandoning her, as his departure implies, one can understand her desire to clutch at any sort of union, even a marriage in death" ("A Rose for Emily"). Emily was desperate for love, and she did not intend to let Homer go, even if it meant murder.

In Montresor's murder of Fortunato, the motivation is clearly to extract revenge for "the thousand injuries" inflicted upon Montresor, though the reader is never told what "the thousand injuries" are. Given Montresor's arrogant nature, the "insult" could have been the tiniest remark, perhaps only a joke, which Montresor would have taken out of context. Baraban writes, "Fortunato's disrespect of Montresor, regardless of the form it takes, is a sufficient basis for Montresor's revenge" (51). Montresor is extremely envious of Fortunato's wealth and higher social standing, especially if Fortunato was born into a lower ranking social class than Montresor, and now he is wealthier than Montresor. Charles May writes that if Montresor is telling the story as a final confession, "the tone or manner of his telling makes it clear that he has not atoned, for he enjoys himself in the telling too much--as much, in fact, as he did when he committed the crime itself" (48-49). Spurred on by his arrogance, pride, and the "thousand injuries", in Montresor's mind, the only method of revenge for Fortunato was murder.

Miss Emily Grierson and Montresor, both overly proud and arrogant, and both premeditated murders, are not very different. Though their individual motives for murder differ, the way they carried out their murders are not so different. Homer and Fortunato's corpses both

remained sealed for several decades within the homes of the person who murdered them.

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Energy

Energy is more diverse than most think and is defined differently by many. This concept to me is a little broader than that of others. Energy is not just the electricity that runs through our light bulbs or the burning gasoline running through our vehicles. It is both of these things, but I feel it is so much more. Energy is something that can be shared between all things. We share energy with the people around us, our pets, crystals, nature, and even our electronic devices. It is the sensory perception of our soul. It is the connection we have held with this planet for centuries. It is the connection that exists between people and all living things. It maintains the balance in this chaotic world. People from all over believe that focusing energy on a specific idea or entity can create change. It has also been scientifically proven that this type of manipulation is possible, but it is not known to what scale. *Messages in Water*, by Victor Shopenhauer, teach us that people can manipulate the structure of water molecules using focused energy. If we are made up of ninety percent water, then why can't the same concept apply to us? If we focused positive energy on a person, could the altering of the structure of the water molecules create a positive effect on the person? I believe it can, and it is something that we do every day whether it is noticed by people or not.

Energies of the body have been identified in some religions. The concept of Chakras is the idea that our bodies work on a set of energies at seven different points, from the genitals, to the crown of the head, and down to the lower back. This was a concept that only Asian and Indian cultures embraced until the last century. Most people do not believe in this idea. One photographer believed that this concept had some kind of validity, and he began trying to photograph the energy that people release. He developed a special camera to be able to capture these energies on film. First, he was able to capture what most people refer to as Auras. This is the

energy that surrounds a person at any given moment. He was successful in photographing Auras. He photographed many different people; the photographs caught a wide variety of different colors, from bright gold to dull and dark. This led him to try to capture this concept of Chakras. Surprisingly, he was absolutely successful. He photographed people, and the photographs showed a set of seven different oscillating circles that rotated at different speeds throughout the body. What he found through these photos was interesting. The people he photographed whose chakras were, oscillating at the same time and at the same speed were in a state of mental and physical well-being. The people whose chakras were moving at different speeds and not in time were people who did not feel well physically or mentally in some way; some of these people even reported feeling tired, sick, restless, and generally not happy. The pictures made a bit of a splash in the scientific world. The pictures were discredited by some and embraced by others.

The existence of multiple energies in our bodies and throughout all living things is a concept that some find unbelievable, yet others can feel their existence every day. Some of these people developed these senses of feeling energies and even manipulating them. For many centuries people from around the world have used focused energy as a form of healing. There are some people who have dedicated their lives to learning this form of healing and many people who do not believe that it can heal anything. We have all seen Mr. Miagi perform his healing trick on “Daniel Son” in the classic 80’s movie *Karate Kid*. This is the same kind of healing that is performed all over the world. It is called Reiki and was developed by Japanese Buddhists in the 1920’s. This technique is commonly called palm healing. These healers claim to transfer healing energy in the form of Chi through their palms. The Japanese believe that Chi is the flow of energy that exists in all things. Tai chi is a martial art form as well as a slow dance that expresses this flow of energy. It is practiced by many people of many backgrounds. It is a form of focusing energy within the body through movements in nature. Yoga is also similar in this aspect. It uses nature poses to focus the energy in the body, creating a feeling of calm and self-awareness. Asian cultures have spent many centuries developing their connection with the energies in their bodies as well as the energies that exist in within nature.

Many native cultures have developed a connection of energy with their land and the animals that live on this land. The Native American cultures had this connection with the earth, because the earth was the energy that provided for all forms of life. The animals had spirits that served different energy purposes and would be called on during ceremonies for different reasons. The bear was strong and proud, the rabbit was cunning and quick, the owl was wise, and these spirits would be called on when this type of energy was needed. The spirit is the purest form of energy. Native Americans understood the energy connection in nature and spirits like Asian cultures did. These cultures believed in the presence of the spirits of their ancestors and would call on them in times of need. Spirits exist everywhere. I believe that the paranormal "ghostly spirits" are residual spirits that linger around us all of the time. Paranormal investigations use electromagnetic field detectors to pick up the presence of these types of energy. It is believed that ghostly spirits have to draw energy from their surroundings in order to manifest into tangible entities. Many people who have claimed to witness the paranormal also report having felt cold spots in the room. These cold spots are the areas which the energy is being drawn from. This may be caused by the charged particles in that area being pulled away into some unknown. This causes the temperature of these areas to drop. There are many new technologies that were created for the sake of paranormal investigations. All of these technologies are simply meters and detectors that identify multiple types of energies. The spirit is the energy core of our being; some energy lingers and some dissipates.

Many people believe in the paranormal, and many people do not. This goes the same for Karma. Karma is the idea that the energy from the actions we make, whether positive or negative, will return to us in the same fashion and possibly worse. It is a simple concept of, "If you do good things, then good things will happen to you; when you do bad things, worse things happen to you." To me, this is simply the energy that one has displaced into the world that returns to them in full-circle. For every action there is a reaction. I believe this holds true in the universe around us. We make waves in a pond that ripple throughout the world, only to return from where they began.

Another energy charged matter that many people believe are simply rocks, have much higher energy value in other circles. Plato once wrote of a city in the sea. The city of Atlantis, according to Plato, was so technologically advanced that the Atlantians had harnessed the power of crystals to create lasers. Plato was the only one of his time to document such feats of crystal power. Crystals have been regarded by many cultures for their energy. There are many different types of crystals and each type seems to have a different energy resonance. I have experienced the different energy levels of crystals in classes where I was subjected to multiple types of crystals. The crystal skulls of the Myans are possibly the most unique and unexplained crystals in the world. They are perfect crystal skulls that could not have been constructed with crude tools. Crystals harness the power of light and are able to refract and create the color spectrum through the light spectrum. Crystals were created by and are connected with the earth. The earth and the sun together are the two energies that give life to this planet. The crystals come from the earth and can harness the power of the sun. Man was able to harness the power of the sun and crystals to create energy for powering the home. Man used the power of quartz crystal to create solar panels and many other sun powered devices.

Many people feel that if you do not believe in something then that means it does not exist. I believe that energy exists whether people believe in it or not. Energy of all things surrounds us. We utilize these energies every day. The simple act of comforting a friend in need is an act of displacing your energy into another with hopes of positive results. Caring for someone is an energy connection that is established between two beings and grows. Many times people unknowingly tap into their energies through their emotions. Love and hatred are the strongest energies any one person possesses. These emotional energy connections we share bind us to these people. These people are our friends, family, enemies and anyone we have shared a connection with throughout our lives, even if it was only a moment. Even the shared connection with our meals and drinks that have come from the earth are an energy exchange. I believe that these energies tie us to each other and the world around us. I also believe that collective focus of energies can cause tangible results. Energy is the web of the universe to which we are all bound, and it connects all things. It is the breath of intuition and heightened awareness of self. It is all around: just close your eyes and feel it. It is the hum, it is the tranquility, it is the

unexplained, it is the sun on your skin and the wind on your face, it is the air in your lungs that was given from the earth. This is what feeds your soul, your well-being, and your life. Drink it up. Eat it up. Share it. Embrace it. Enjoy it, and be merry.

Cola Williamson

Chris Cox

English 113

March 3, 2011

"The Lottery"

Throughout the history of humanity, violence and evil have been two of the most influential elements that have driven the human race. Some people say that violence has molded our society into what we view as a "normal society" because violence is incorporated throughout our everyday activities as human beings from entertainment, warfare, and even personal desires. I think that violence and evil are some of the basic codes of conduct among the human race; without violence and evil we would not be the humans that we are today; violence has walked hand in hand with humans for so long that violence has fundamentally become the backbone of society. There have been a plethora of events in the past and present that "The Lottery" in particular can relate to, such as the Roman gladiators in the coliseum, the Holocaust, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and even today's media.

In Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery", the appetite for violence is more than prevalent. In this story Jackson does a wonderful job of revealing to us as readers how humans find violence to be essential to life. The lottery has been taking place in this town for as long as anyone can remember; in addition, the townspeople are convinced that the lottery is what determines the town's existence, and to do away with it would drastically reduce the town's chances of prospering. Jackson also exposes in "The Lottery" the disturbing fact that humans find little interest in non-violence. Jackson wrote "The Lottery" in 1948, when the wounds of WWII were

still fresh in the eyes of the world. "The Lottery" deals with live issues and issues that are relevant to our time.

The Romans and their infamous coliseum is a time in history that can relate to "The Lottery". The coliseum was a place where massive crowds of Roman citizens would gather to watch slaves and prisoners slaughter each other unmercifully, purely for the amusement of the Roman citizens. The barbaric Romans are closely related to the people in "The Lottery" because every person in town shows up with the anticipation of watching someone die. I draw these conclusions from the Romans because Jackson's characters reflect people in the real world: she shows us just how savage and bloodthirsty people and reality are. As previously stated, if there is the tiniest bit of violence involved in a situation, then a person can bet that human interest will definitely peak. Humans will never miss a chance to watch a little violence occur, just like the Romans would never miss a chance to watch a few slaves slaughter each other.

Another event in particular that relates to "The Lottery" is the Holocaust. Adolf Hitler in the late 1930s and early 1940s was certain that the Jewish people were the image and foundation of all pandemonium and corruption; therefore, he formed a plan called the "final solution," in which he eliminated over six million Jews. In "The Lottery", one person is chosen every year to be sacrificed by the townspeople to ensure a productive crop for the coming year. Like the townspeople, Hitler chose the Jews for sacrificing because he believed that the German people as a whole could only thrive and benefit at the expense of annihilating the entire Jewish population. In "The Lottery", there are a handful of people who seem to doubt the idea of sacrificing a person just to ensure the coming year's crop. Some people in the town go as far as to mention that the neighboring towns have done away with the lottery and that their crops have not suffered from the lack of human sacrifice. This proves that the lottery has become a cornerstone of this

specific town, just like violence is the foundation of today's society; moreover, society would be lost without its beloved violence, and the town would be adrift without their lottery. In Nazi Germany there were citizens who disagreed with the decree that was placed on the Jews, but just like old man Warner, there were Germans who insisted that the annihilation of the Jews was crucial to the success and rise of a greater Germany. This story and event are closely related because both stories have some group sacrificing another group in the belief that their particular town or country could benefit and flourish from the killings; consequently, it was crucial to continue with the killings to ensure prosperity.

Another event in history that is extremely relevant to the overwhelming lust for violence in "The Lottery" is the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945. Why would a country approve the use of such a destructive weapon on civilians? The Americans say that this happened because the surrender of Japan was imperative in the saving of American lives. Essentially, it is reasonable to take lives in order to save more important lives. The same event happens in "The Lottery". The townspeople must have the lottery in order to ensure and preserve the survival of their town, even if it means killing one of their cohorts. Jackson does a spectacular job of conveying how humans can justify killing without having guilty consciences. Jackson may have been inspired by the bombings when she wrote "The Lottery"; she subtly relates the two bombings in particular by revealing to us how both the Americans and the townspeople are so persistent on their survival that they are willing to take innocent lives at any cost to guarantee victory or a productive harvest guilt-free.

Today's media is the basis for most human entertainment, and, ironically, a good portion of the media has always been centered around some sort of violence, whether it is warfare or just a simple car wreck on the side of the road, where drivers barely creep past the wreckage in hopes

of satisfying their desires for a glimpse of blood, guts, or a mangled body. Even most video games today seem to have the focus of violence all over them. The video game *Modern Warfare* is one that reeks of violence. *Modern Warfare* is a critically acclaimed game with multiple sequels that deals with nothing much other than killing and destruction. In "The Lottery", violence is the center and focus of the story, with Jackson's characters having an unquenchable desire to participate in the lottery every year. These ravenous aspirations are still evident in the prosperity of video games like these. "The Lottery" and the media show us how rooted and important violence still is in our society even today.

Violence is smeared all over the face of humanity. It has come to be so necessary to the survival of humans that without violence I fear that the human race would undoubtedly perish since humans have become unconsciously reliant on violence. Violence has become so grounded in society that I predict that it will inevitably be the destruction and downfall of humanity, for we are animals and the name of the game is survival of the fittest. I feel that when Shirley Jackson wrote "The Lottery", she was trying to show the world how important and established we have let violence become in our lives and that destruction is unavoidable. I also feel that "The Lottery" is an everyday reminder of how cruel and self-centered we as humans really are. Violence is only going to progress with time for the reasons that humans have consistently shown throughout history. People are successfully able to adapt their appetites for violence to the present time; furthermore, whether it is a country, a single person, or the whole world, the entirety of the human race has never, nor will it ever be, that far from savagery.

Throughout the duration of humanity, violence and evil has inexplicably made its way into the heart of society. Violence has affected humanity so much that it has developed into a natural instinct, and in "The Lottery", Jackson exposes the real face of humanity and how violent

we truly are. "The Lottery" can relate to many events in the past and present, like the Roman gladiators in the coliseum, the Holocaust, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and even today's media. Shirley Jackson was no fool; she saw humans for what they really are: violent and bloodthirsty.

The Gifts that Keep on Giving

Has anyone truly been able to discover the gifts that keep on giving? Oftentimes, we as humans feel that money, presents, and gifts are the few items that show others that we care and are willing to offer our help. Though these items do provide temporary comfort or help, they only last or make an impression for a short amount of time. So, what are the gifts that last a lifetime? Love and kindness are the gifts that keep on giving. Love and kindness can be given on a daily basis, but many times it isn't until the effects of these gifts are seen that humans understand just how much of an impact they can have.

The warehouse was cold, the kind of cold that seems to creep through your clothes, pierce your skin, and seep down deep to the bone. This warehouse was known as God's Closet, an organization that helps to meet the physical and spiritual needs of those in surrounding counties and communities. The families that come to God's Closet can receive clothing throughout the year, as well as temporary housing at times when they may be in need. I could only imagine how the long line of people waiting at the front door must have felt as their bodies were exposed to the frigid winter air. As the coldness of the warehouse sunk into my body, I caught myself anxiously glancing at my phone waiting for it to show seven o'clock. I would then begin carrying out the instructions I had been given by the organization's leader: provide each person with a jacket, blanket, pair of socks, and most importantly, a Bible and love. I had thought about these instructions and tried to figure out how I could show love to complete strangers without making them feel uncomfortable. How could I give love to these people when I would only be with them for one day, much less for only a few minutes? A few moments were all I had to come up with an answer for these questions. I would soon realize the answers to these questions would be slowly but dramatically revealed with each person I encountered at this warehouse.

As seven o'clock rolled around, the doors were opened to dozens of eyes examining their surroundings. Every pair of eyes that met mine told a different story. Some gazes never left mine, while others diverted quickly to the concrete floor. As I walked up to the first family, both fear and excitement ran through my body. I was more than grateful to be able to provide this family with needed winter supplies, but I was more thankful to have the opportunity to show them the kindness and love they would read about in the Bible they would receive that day. What if this family failed to see my kindness and love? The only thing I could do was break the ice and hope for the best. I took a deep breath, as if to hold in what was left of my security and confidence, and embraced the mother of the family. I could feel the coldness trapped within her clothes, and could only hope she felt the warmth of my heart. The expression on her face was that of bewilderment. It was too late to turn back now. As the expression gradually changed into a smile, I knew it was going to be a good day. During the ten minutes I spent with this family, I felt I had known them for a lifetime. They began to open up, sharing stories of their lives that brought tears to my eyes. During these stories, listening was all that had to be done. This was just what this family needed; someone that would listen and show that they care.

As I introduced myself to various families that came in, I was greeted with a quick "hello" that could be translated into, "Do these people really care, can I trust them?" As I began asking questions, many families started treating me like an old friend, filling me in on their lives in the past few months. I could see the walls they had built up for protection slowly crumbling. I realized that even though we were attempting to meet the physical needs of these people, what they truly needed the most was love. They needed the love that allowed them to open up and simply talk to someone. They needed the love that wouldn't pass judgment on the tears that streamed from their eyes as they shared personal stories about their lives. Throughout the day I saw eyes filled with happiness, thankfulness, excitement, eagerness, hurt, pain, and shamefulness. Amongst all of these emotions I

also saw humbleness and humility. No matter what background a person may have come from, every individual deserves to receive love and kindness, even if for only a day.

As the last family left God's Closet, the warehouse was no longer cold. The warehouse was warm, the kind of warm that seems to creep through your clothes, pierce your skin, and seep down deep to your heart. Not a word was spoken from the volunteers dispersed throughout the warehouse. We all knew the experience was too great to be described with words. If we as humans would only let our guard down to offer a simple hug, even to strangers, we have the chance to change lives forever. Kindness and love truly are the gifts that keep on giving.

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